

**CASCADE COUNTY
SHERIFF - CORONER'S
OFFICE**

**OFFICE OF SHERIFF / CORONER
3800 ULM NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD
GREAT FALLS, MT. 59404**

**SHERIFF
David L. Castle**



**UNDERSHERIFF
C.B. Corneliusen**

January 26th, 2007

Testimony: 1-26-07

Introduction: Sheriff/Coroner David Castle,

History: First regional prison opened, January 11th, 1998 [approx. 156 beds]

Regional jail [approx. 210 beds]

We made an investment in a partnership and any logical person would expect a return.

Corrections is a tough and demanding career, and I respect anyone choosing that field and department of public service.

The Office of Sheriff as with many Elected Offices is not simply another "department" within government; It is an "Office" of government. The Office of Sheriff is one of the oldest constitutional offices. The Sheriff's powers are all conclusive statewide. These powers are only the dictate of the electorate. I say this to emphasize the demand from the public and obligation from the elected official to allocate resources effectively and efficiently.

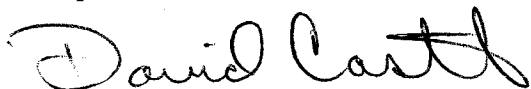
In response to the overcrowding, management and budgeting problems that the Department of Corrections continually works on and is focused on, I would be remiss as a Sheriff if I didn't make it perfectly clear,, Overcrowding and the Cost is a "symptom" of a problem and not the "problem" in and of itself. The criminal justice system as a whole, including courts, agencies with court related functions, mandated sentencing, and law enforcement all have a direct influence in creating the "problems" of overcrowding that is prevalent in Montana.

The answer is local! Now more than ever, Sheriff's Offices across the State need to take a proactive approach at crime. Prevention and education should come first. Our own Governor, Brian Schweitzer, agrees with my philosophy of building our communities not more jails. We have partners in Cascade County working hard to make that happen, including County Commissioners, District and Justice Courts, [treatment courts] the County Attorney's Office, law enforcement and many private resources with mental health, Casa Can, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, Churches, Schools, Weed and Seed, Opportunities Inc., Healthy Youth Coalition, Neighborhood housing, Montana Meth Project and the list goes on.

But! When a partner doesn't want to pay their fair share, then it robs from the rest. In Cascade County's behalf, they are not a partner. Law Enforcements mission has always been to take a hard nosed look at research about what really works and what doesn't work to keep people from becoming criminals. Investment in education, churches, child abuse prevention, after school programs, and local government involvement are the most effective strategies to prevent crime and violence – and make all of us Safer....

Cascade County was the first Regional prison, signing a contract in 1995 with the Department of Corrections on a partnership. DOC has proven time and time again that they are blind to see the effect they have as a partner.

Respectfully, Sheriff David Castle

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Castle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and a stylized "C".